

On May 4, 2005, the Department of Sociology & Anthropology hosted its second annual Senior Research Symposium. At the event, students presented the results of research that they conducted over the course of the capstone Senior Seminar in Sociology & Anthropology during the Spring 2005 semester. Dr. Christopher Kovats-Bernat led that seminar and introduced the program at the Symposium.

Students draft their proposals in the Fall Research Methodology I course, and carry out the research in their senior year during the Spring capstone seminar. The Senior Symposium, held every May, provides those students with a professional opportunity to gain experience in presenting data to an academic community, a skill that is highly valued in graduate programs of study.

Sean Anderson

"The European Werewolf: From Myth to Criminal"



The European werewolf, a human who has transformed into an animal, usually a wolf, dog, or other canine, through the use of extraordinary means, has a long historical tradition. The ancient Greeks told folklore stories about the werewolf, as did the Vikings. The Greek Gods would often times transform into animals themselves and Odysseus's crew was turned into pigs, not surprisingly by a witch, during their journey. Later, in the Middle Ages the threat of werewolves became very real in European minds and the courts. Werewolf folklore at this time transformed from a merely benign and harmless set of stories, myths, and legends, into a real and punishable threat to society. The werewolf became an evil tool of Satan channeled through a person as opposed to a power vested within the gods which they used for both good and evil means. Transformation into a werewolf became a criminal activity in the Middle Ages and this criminality continued through the Reformation into the nineteenth century. I intend to examine how this once harmless mythical being became a real threat to European society worthy of accusation, trial, and deadly punishment. Anthropologists in general, and especially those who study folklore and supernatural beliefs and processes, have left a gap in the literature concerning theories of the origin of and reasoning behind werewolf accusations. I aim to construct a new theory which integrates the power relationships of the actors involved, the historical significance of folklore and a belief in otherness, along with social institutions such as the court system, especially the process of secretive sentencing, into a web of circumstances and variables which together will be seen as a rational system of social control.

Emily Oster

"If the Founders were Mothers: Female Legislators Impact on US Public Policy"



Women's political participation is on the rise, evident by the moderate but steady increase of women holding elected office on both the national and state levels. Does this trend have a larger outward affect? Specifically, does an increased number of female representatives elected into public office have an effect on public policy? Using information from 2003 to 2004, I categorized six states into either high levels of female representation or low levels of female representation, based upon each state legislature's proportion of females. Washington, Colorado, and Maryland were labeled as high levels of female representation and South Carolina, Alabama, and Kentucky were labeled as low levels of female representation. I compared the effectiveness of female legislators between the two levels by conducting a quantitative data analysis, calculating the rates of primary bill sponsorship of legislation by female senators and the corresponding rates of passed bills. I also examined the effect the proportion of female legislators present had on the introduction and passage of "women's issues" legislation, using education as the indicator. My findings support the theory that increased female representation does have an impact on females' ability to effectively legislate. However, other variables, such as length of time in office and party affiliation may also be factors suggesting the need for future research.

John Schroeder

"Changes in the Nature of Japanese Spirituality in Relation to Immigration to the United States"



Since the end of World War II the Japanese have become an economic power in the world. As an economic power the Japanese have many dealings with the United States. After World War II there was a tremendous rise in Japanese immigration to the United States. While immigration was not new to the United States the Japanese immigrants were very different from former immigrant groups (Montero, 1981). One major difference is the Japanese were able to maintain a standard of

living that was close to that of the majority group (Jiobu, 1981). Because Japanese immigrants have accomplished this, it is important to study what they do differently that allows them to adjust to life in the United States more readily. One area where Japanese society is very unique is in their worship of religions. They do not restrict themselves to one religion but in fact many individuals practice two or more (Ruiz, 1969). Whether Japanese immigrants after their practice of various religion upon immigration to American or maintain it has not been a topic of study that has been inquired into. This proposed study would investigate what changes occur in the Japanese spiritual practices upon immigration to America as well as hypothesize what the causes and benefits of the changes are.

Emily Yedowitz

"The Last Common Ancestor between the Hominid and Pongid Lines: Evaluating the Possibilities Using Fossil and Genetic Data"



The questions revolving around a complete understanding of human evolution have remained frustratingly unanswerable for decades. With new scientific processes and improved techniques, however, more data are being found thus allowing for the uncovering of more specific answers to these crucial questions. In order to determine human origins it is imperative to trace the Hominid evolutionary line back to the time when the Hominid and Pongid lines emerged, forming two distinct branches from the same ancestral trunk. This shared ancestor is referred to as the Last Common Ancestor (LCA) and is generally believed to have lived between seven and nine million years ago. This study aims to complete a thorough investigation of the existing literature, to identify the areas of contention and agreement among scientists regarding the physical traits of LCA; to evaluate current theories regarding the LCA; to propose possible anatomical features and physical characteristics of the species especially in the areas of dentition, skull structure and size, pelvis, hands, and feet; and to eliminate and/or support the phenotypic suggestions by applying genetic mutation theories and molecular data analysis to the possibilities. The combination of approaches taken to achieve these objectives bring this meta-analytical project to a level of originality and, consequently will enable the subject of the LCA to be investigated very thoroughly. This study will benefit the scientific community in suggesting where projects need to focus in the future in terms of specific anatomical traits and the period of time most ambiguous. The research presented here also will have a tremendous impact on the general population by showing that scientists are getting closer in identifying our human origins.

Sara Harris

"El Cruce: The Intersection of U.S. Immigration Policies and Latino Immigrants in the Lehigh Valley"



Although immigration to the United States has existed since the very creation of this nation, the recent intensification of immigration policies has been quite problematic. Current U.S. immigration policies seek to harshly restrict and regulate those persons wishing to enter the “Land of Opportunity.” Regardless of the increase and severity of the U.S. immigration policies, these policies have had little effect on reducing immigration rates from Mexico and Central and South America. Therefore, what relationship exists between U.S. immigration policies and Latino immigrants within the Lehigh Valley? This research analyzes the lived experiences of Latino immigrants in the Lehigh Valley. The lived experiences have been evaluated in terms of migration behaviors and work experiences. These lived experiences are further complicated by the presence or absence of documentation.

Cindy Tepper

"The Significance of Song: An Analysis of How Politics in the Middle East Have Affected Israeli Popular Music"

Since Israeli became a state in 1948, Israelis have experienced increasing violence and war due to the conflict over land between Israel and its broadening Arab nations. This study seeks to determine the degree to which conflict in the Middle East has directly affected the popular music in Israel. In this study, I identified Israeli popular music, and sorted it by its emergence within Israeli history. Then I determined the themes that have emerged in Israeli popular music, and identified how the themes have changed over time since 1948. I conducted a comprehensive literature review of primary and secondary sources, as well as listening to, analyzing and coding Israeli popular music. My research generates theoretical consequences of the conflict in the Middle East on popular music in Israeli by combining previous theories on “art and revolution” (Wagner, 1993) and Israeli popular music (Regev, 1989). Overall, my research has implied that although no direct correlations can be made between Israeli popular music and specific political events, the overall changing political condition of Israeli over time has had a direct affect on its respective popular music.

Tara Trudnak*"Multicultural Programming and its Effects on Diversity in Higher Education: A case study of Muhlenberg College"*

In recent administrative policies, such as the strategic plan of 2004, Muhlenberg College has been emphasizing the importance of diversifying the student body. This research will focus on how multicultural programs have and can ultimately help add diversity to the campus. Part of what the college needs in order to make the population more diverse is to confront the importance of diversity through multiculturalism in school programming. The first step is to find an overall consensus of how the college currently defines diversity and then assess what needs to be changed or implemented in current programming to promote diversity on campus. I will conduct a comprehensive review of recent anthropological and sociological literature relating to multicultural program implementation in higher education and draw on the field methods of applied anthropology and traditional ethnography to assess the needs and necessary changes in the programming and diversity initiatives at higher education institutions. I will compare multicultural programs and diversity demographics at Muhlenberg to other similar (in size, selectivity, demographics and activities) Lehigh Valley Alliance of Independent Colleges liberal arts institutions to analyze any sufficient differences in programming and its relation to diversity on campus and to the student's perceptions of diversity. The findings of this project will contribute to sorely needed data on the efficacy of implementing multicultural programs as part of Muhlenberg's ongoing effort to increase diversity on campus. An important outcome will be a better sense of how the Muhlenberg community views diversity, if multiculturalism and how diversity programming at Muhlenberg compares with that of other similar schools.